

Jamaican Independence anniversary on the BBC

THIS August will mark the 40th anniversary of Jamaican independence and to celebrate the occasion, the BBC presents a choice of programming on television, radio and online with BBCi.

Embracing the island's politics, sport, music and people, the programmes capture Jamaica's history, character and world-wide influence.

Set against the social and political background of the nation, BBC Two's Reggae: The Story Of Jamaican Music offers an in-depth, revealing look at the musical genre from the Sixties to the present day. The three-part series, starting Sunday, August

4th chronicles how reggae has conquered the music world and rocked successive generations, all on its own terms. The programmes hear from early innovators such as Prince Buster, Jimmy Cliff, Bunny Wailer, and U-Roy, through to more recent artists like Maxi Priest.

The reggae evolution is also explored in BBC Radio 2's Island Rock - 40 Years Of Jamaican Musical Independence. Presented by former Aswad frontman, Brinsley Forde, the series is an authoritative overview of Jamaican music, broadcast over eight weeks from Wednesday, 12th June, to Wednesday, July 31.

In Blood And Fire, BBC Two, Sunday, August 4th, theologian and historian, Dr Robert Beckford presents a history of Jamaica's struggle for independence and political autonomy. Hearing from those who were part of the historic story and those steeped in the island's chronology, the programme captures the rebellion, tribalism and rivalry that was part of the independence process.

Whether it be cricket or jerk chicken, I Love Jamaica, BBC Two on Saturday, August 3, will give viewers the A to Z to the country. The programme will hear from Jamaicans, Jamacophiles and those

who have been a feature in the Jamaican story. From the sounds and the fashions, to the icons and the cuisine, the programme celebrates the very best cultural exports from the island in the sun.

BBC Two Controller, Jane Root says, "I felt strongly that we should mark this special anniversary on BBC Two to reflect Jamaica's cultural richness and diversity. I'm really excited about these programmes as they will offer viewers a guide to the events and people who have shaped the Jamaica story since its independence, and also capture the impact of the island's many influences far

beyond its shores."

The anniversary will also be highlighted on the BBC's newly launched digital arts channel, BBC Four. Programmes include Life And Debt - a Storyville Special, about Jamaica and the impact of debt on small countries; an examination of the island's cultural output in a Talk Show Special, and a Profile piece on poet, musician and political theorist, Linton Kwesi Johnson.

All programmes will be accompanied by significant online presence; bbc.co.uk/reggae will offer users a colourful array of facts, presenter chats and music.